

Committee on Academic Misconduct (COAM)

Annual Report

Summer Semester 2019 – Spring Semester 2020

Prepared by

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The University's *Code of Student Conduct* defines academic misconduct as "any activity that tends to compromise the academic integrity of the university, or subvert the educational process" (Faculty Rule 3335-23-04[A]). The Committee on Academic Misconduct (COAM) is charged with maintaining the University's academic integrity by investigating and adjudicating "all reported cases of student academic misconduct, with the exception of cases in a professional college having a published honor code." In instances where a student has violated the University's *Code of Student Conduct*, COAM decides upon "suitable disciplinary action" (University Rule 3335-5-487[B]). The data for this year's annual report consist of cases resolved from May 5, 2019, to May 10, 2020 and the report follows the templates for reporting developed by previous COAM chairs and coordinators.

The data in this report reflect changes that resulted from a shift to online learning because of COVID-19. COAM altered its hearing procedures after the shift to online learning. Panel hearings for students who were not graduating were postponed and priority was given to resolving cases for students who had applied to graduate. Panel hearings were replaced by administrative hearings because of concerns about the availability of a quorum for full panel hearings. Dr. Van Zandt presided over the administrative hearings as the Chair of COAM. All administrative hearings were held using Carmen Zoom. COAM resumed panel hearings using Carmen Zoom at the start of Summer 2020 term. Links to previous annual reports can be found on the Senate website http://senate.osu.edu/?page_id=183 or at <http://oaa.osu.edu/coamreports.html>. It should be noted that the 2012-13 reporting year was shorter in comparison with previous years because of calendar changes associated with OSU's conversion to semesters.

COAM is composed of 22 faculty members, nine graduate students (appointed by CGS), and nine undergraduate students (appointed by USG). The work of COAM is facilitated by the Coordinator who (1) receives and processes allegations of academic misconduct, (2) notifies

students of allegations of academic misconduct, (3) consults with students and faculty regarding allegations of academic misconduct, (4) schedules hearings to resolve allegations of academic misconduct, and (5) notifies students and faculty of the outcomes of these hearings.

Every student who is charged with academic misconduct has the right to a hearing before a panel of COAM. A panel consists of at least four members of COAM, and the rules require that each panel have at least two faculty representatives and one student representative. The panel serves as an impartial hearing body that hears evidence and determines (1) if a student has violated the University's *Code of Student Conduct*, and (2) an appropriate sanction in cases where a student is found "in violation." If a student agrees with the allegations of academic misconduct and waives his/her right to a hearing, he/she may have the allegations resolved as an administrative decision. For an administrative decision, a member of COAM, typically the Coordinator, serves as a hearing officer and determines appropriate sanctions.

I. SUMMARY OF CASES RESOLVED

During the 2019-2020 academic year, COAM resolved 721 cases of alleged academic misconduct. Of the cases resolved, 70.2% were resolved as administrative decisions and 29.8% were resolved as panel hearings (**Table 1**). Females and males represented 38.8% and 60.2%, respectively, of the cases resolved (**Table 2**). Seven students (1.0%) did not specify a gender.

Table 1
Committee on Academic Misconduct
Summary of Total Cases Resolved and Method of Resolution
2019-2020 Academic Year

Method of Resolution	Number of Cases	% of Total Cases
Administrative Decisions	506	70.2
Panel Hearings	215	29.8
Totals	721	100

Table 2
Committee on Academic Misconduct
Summary of Total Cases Resolved and Student's Gender
2019-2020 Academic Year

Gender	Number of Cases	% of Total Cases
Female	280	38.8
Male	434	60.2
Preferred not to answer	7	1.0
Totals	721	100

Of the cases resolved by COAM this past reporting year, 656¹ (91.0%) resulted in verdicts of “in violation.” The rates at which males and females were found “in violation” of the *Code of Student Conduct* were 89.9% for females, 89.8% for males and 100.0% for other (Table 3).

Table 3
Committee on Academic Misconduct
Distribution of Cases by Verdict and Gender
2019-2020 Academic Year

Gender	Students Found “Not In Violation”	Students Found “In Violation”	Total Cases	% In Violation (% of Total for Gender)
Female	21	259	280	92.5
Male	44	390	434	89.9
Other	0	7	7	100.0
Totals	65	656	721	---

II. SUMMARY OF ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT CHARGES

When allegations of academic misconduct arise, a student often does not know or understand what he/she has allegedly done wrong. Since COAM desires that the hearing process be an educational process, the Coordinator meets with students charged with violating the Code of Student Conduct upon request and explains the nature of the behavior that led to the allegations. Table 4 summarizes information on academic misconduct charges for the 2019-2020 academic year. The left column is a list of the types of charges used most commonly by

¹ Total verdicts adjusted after appeals, as noted in Section VI of this report.

COAM. The “Number of Charges” column lists the total number of charges assigned by COAM for each particular violation, and the “% of Total Charges” column lists the number of charges as a percentage of the total charges (1625). The last two columns list the number of findings of “in violation” associated with each charge and the respective percentage for each. For example, of 228 charges of plagiarism, 220 (96.5%) were found “in violation.”

Students are often charged with and found “in violation” of more than one charge. Thus, the total number of charges (1625) exceeds the total number of cases resolved by COAM (721), and the total for “Number In Violation” (1424) exceeds the actual number of *students* found “in violation” (656).

The relatively lower values for the percentages of students found “in violation” of unauthorized collaboration and copying are potentially misleading. They result because COAM often treats the charges of “copying” and “unauthorized collaboration” as mutually exclusive. In many of the cases where COAM receives information alleging that one student may have copied the work of another student, it is not clear which student (if any) copied and whether or not there was collusion (working together in an unauthorized manner). Thus, in many of these cases, the students involved are charged with both copying *and* unauthorized collaboration, but may be found “in violation” of only one of those charges. In other words, copying is considered to be a unilateral act, where one student copies from another, whereas unauthorized collaboration involves two students working together.

“Failure to comply with course/program policies/guidelines” generally accompanies the other more specific charges, and so a student who is found in violation on a specific charge may also be found—by entailment—in violation of course policy. In the majority of COAM cases, charges against students stem from the failure to follow course or assignment guidelines, and this charge may be used by itself alone if the allegations stem directly from a failure to follow course guidelines.

COAM’s list of standard charges was updated in 2013-14 to better correspond to the examples listed in the revised Code of Student Conduct. The following charges were added to COAM’s standard charges in 2013-14: (1) “Knowingly providing or receiving information during examinations such as course examinations and candidacy examinations; or the possession and/or use of unauthorized materials during those examinations”, and (2) “Compromising the academic integrity of the university/subverting the educational process”, which refers to rule 3335-23-04 A of the Code of Student Conduct. It should be noted that alleged violations related to examinations might also be covered by other charges such as copying or unauthorized collaboration/ unauthorized assistance and thus the number of cases associated with this charge likely underestimates the number of incidents that occur during exams or other assessments. The latter charge is generally qualified with a specific description of the alleged misconduct when it falls outside of the most frequent charges or when the standard charges do not adequately capture the nature of the alleged misconduct.

Table 4
Committee on Academic Misconduct
Summary of Academic Misconduct Charges by Type and Verdict
2019-2020 Academic Year

Charge	Number of Charges	% of Total Charges	Number in Violation	% in Violation
Violation of course rules or assignment guidelines as contained in the course syllabus or other information provided to the student	699	43.0	631	90.3
Submitting plagiarized work for an academic requirement	228	14.0	220	96.5
Unauthorized collaboration by sharing information during an academic activity/unauthorized sharing of electronic files	199	12.2	164	82.4
Copying the work of another and representing it as one's own work	207	12.7	156	75.4
Knowingly requesting, receiving or providing unauthorized assistance during an academic activity	4	0.2	4	100.0
Possession or use of unauthorized materials during an academic activity	18	1.1	17	94.4
Compromising the academic integrity of the university/subverting the educational process + "other"	22	1.4	20	90.9
Falsification, fabrication or dishonesty in creating or reporting laboratory results, research reports, and/or any other assignments	27	1.7	17	63.0
Knowingly providing or receiving information during examinations such as course examinations and candidacy examinations; or the possession and/or use of unauthorized materials during those examinations.	148	9.1	121	81.85
Engaging in activities that unfairly place other students at an academic disadvantage.	9	0.6	9	100.0

Alteration and resubmission of course materials, grades, or marks in an attempt to change the earned credit or grade	2	0.1	2	100.0
Forgery	4	0.2	4	100.0
Providing falsified materials, documents, or records to a university official in order to meet academic qualifications, criteria, or requirements	4	0.2	4	100.0
Serving as or enlisting the assistance of a substitute for a student during an academic activity	16	1.0	15	93.8
Submission of work not performed in a course or degree program/ Submitting substantially the same work to satisfy requirements for one course or academic requirement that has been submitted in satisfaction of requirements for another course or academic requirement without permission.	38	2.3	31	81.6
Violation of program regulations or policies as established by departmental committees and made available to students.	0	0.0	0	0.0
Totals	1625	100%	1404	--

III. SUMMARY OF CASES BASED ON STUDENT'S ENROLLMENT UNIT AND THE INITIATING UNIT

Twentyone enrollment units on campus were represented in the cases resolved by COAM during the 2019-20 reporting year, with combined cases from the College of the Arts and Sciences (UASC), College of Engineering (UENG), and the Fisher College of Business (UBUS) accounting for 65.7% of the total cases (**Table 5**). It should be noted that although the Graduate School is listed as the enrollment units for 32 cases, those students were in graduate programs offered by other academic departments and/or colleges.

The cases heard by COAM during the past year were *initiated* from or involved courses from 73 units across the University, with the combined cases from courses in Computer Science and Engineering (132 cases), Chemistry and Biochemistry (110), Biology (27), Geography (23) and History (23) accounting for 43.7% of the total cases (**Table 6**). Some units of the university now offer instruction as part of certification programs that may not involve courses listed in the official course catalog maintained by the Registrar. Since the definition of a student in the

Code of Student Conduct includes any person who entered into agreement with the university to take instruction, allegations of academic misconduct in these certification programs are reported to COAM. Those cases are included in the “Other” category at the bottom of **Tables 6, 7 and 8.**

Table 5
Committee on Academic Misconduct
Distribution of Cases Based on Student's Enrollment Unit
2019-2020 Academic Year

Enrollment Unit	Total for Enrollment Unit	% of Total
UASC (College of the Arts and Sciences)	267	37.03%
UENG (College of Engineering)	144	19.97%
UBUS (College of Business)	63	8.74%
UEXP (Exploration Program)	58	8.04%
UEHE (Education and Human Ecology)	40	5.55%
GRD (Graduate School)	32	4.44%
UAGR (College of Food, Agriculture and Environmental Sciences)	20	2.77%
UHRP (School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences) + UHRSP (Pre-program)	20	2.77%
UENR (School of Environment and Natural Resources)	10	1.39%
UPHR (College of Pharmacy)	9	1.25%
UNUR (College of Nursing) + UNURP (Nursing Pre-program)	8	1.11%
UJGS (John Glenn College of Public Affairs)	7	0.97%
UND (Undergraduate Non-Degree)	7	0.97%
USWK (College of Social Work)	7	0.97%
UAHR (School of Architecture)	6	0.83%
UACD (Academy)	5	0.69%
UPBH (College of Public Health)	5	0.69%
VSTR (Visitor)	5	0.69%
ATI (Agricultural Technical Institute)	4	0.55%
UMD (College of Medicine)	2	0.28%
UDHY (Dental Hygiene) + UDHY (Dental Hygiene Pre-program)	2	0.28%
Totals	721	100%

Table 6
Committee on Academic Misconduct
Distribution of Cases Based on Initiating Unit
2019-2020 Academic Year

Course Offering Unit	Number of Cases	% of Total
CSE [Computer Science and Engineering]	132	18.31%
CHEM [Chemistry and Biochemistry]	110	15.26%
BIOLOGY	27	3.77%
GEOG [Geography]	23	3.19%
HISTORY	23	3.19%
PSYCH [Psychology]	22	3.05%
ENGLISH	20	2.77%
THEATRE	18	2.50%
ENGR [Engineering]	17	2.36%
BUSMHR [Business Administration: Management and Human Resources]	15	2.08%
COMM [Communications]	14	1.94%
PHYSICS	14	1.94%
ANTHROP [Anthropology]	13	1.80%
BUSFIN [Business Finance]	13	1.80%
ACCTMIS [Accounting and Management Information Systems]	12	1.66%
MATH [Mathematics]	12	1.66%
PUBAFRS [John Glenn College of Public Affairs]	12	1.66%
ECE [Electrical and Computer Engineering]	11	1.53%
FDSCTE [Food Science and Technology]	11	1.53%
EXP [University Exploration]	11	1.53%
ECON [Economics]	10	1.39%
EDUTL [Education Teaching and Learning]	10	1.39%
MECHENG [Mechanical Engineering]	10	1.39%
ISE [Integrated Systems Engineering]	9	1.25%
AEDECON [Agricultural, Environmental and Developmental Economics]	8	1.11%
AEROENG [Aerospace Engineering]	8	1.11%
POLITSC [Political Science]	8	1.11%
HISTART [History of Art]	7	0.97%
NURSING	7	0.97%
SPANISH	7	0.97%

Table 6 (continued) Distribution of Cases Based on Initiating Unit

STAT [Statistics]	7	0.97%
BUSML [Business Management and Logistics]	6	0.83%
SOCIOL [Sociology]	6	0.83%
AFAMAST [African American and African Studies]	5	0.69%
ARTEDUC [Art Education]	5	0.69%
COMPSTD [Comparative Studies]	5	0.69%
MICROBIO [Microbiology]	5	0.69%
ANIMSCI [Animal Sciences]	4	0.55%
LINGUIST [Linguistics]	4	0.55%
SOCWORK [Social Work]	4	0.55%
ARTSSCI [Arts and Sciences]	3	0.42%
CBE [Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering]	3	0.42%
ENR [Environment and Natural Resources]	3	0.42%
HDFS [Human Development and Family Studies]	3	0.42%
PHR [Pharmacy]	3	0.42%
ART	2	0.28%
BUSMGT [Business Management]	2	0.28%
CIVILEN [Civil Engineering]	2	0.28%
CLAS [Center for Latin America Studies]	2	0.28%
CRP [City and Regional Planning]	2	0.28%
HIMS [Health Information Management & Systems]	2	0.28%
INTSTDS [International Studies]	2	0.28%
MUSIC	2	0.28%
PHILOS [Philosophy]	2	0.28%
RADSCI [Radiation Science]	2	0.28%
RUSSIAN	2	0.28%
AGSYSMT [Agricultural Systems Management]	1	0.14%
ANATOMY	1	0.14%
ARCH [Architecture]	1	0.14%
BIOMEDE [Biomedical Engineering]	1	0.14%
BIOTECH [Biotechnology]	1	0.14%
BSGP [Biomedical Sciences Graduate Program]	1	0.14%
DANCE	1	0.14%
DESIGN	1	0.14%

Table 6 (continued) Distribution of Cases Based on Initiating Unit

EARTHSC [Earth Sciences]	1	0.14%
HCS [Horticulture and Crop Science]	1	0.14%
KNSFHP [Kinesiology: Sports, Fitness and Health Program]	1	0.14%
KNSISM [Kinesiology: Sports Management]	1	0.14%
MATSCEN [Materials Science Engineering]	1	0.14%
MEDLBS [Medical Laboratory Science]	1	0.14%
MILSCI [Military Science]	1	0.14%
MOLGEN [Molecular Genetics]	1	0.14%
RELSTDS [Religious Studies]	1	0.14%
TOTAL	721	100%

IV. SUMMARY OF CASES BASED ON STUDENT’S RANK AND COURSE LEVEL

Approximately 74% of the cases resolved by COAM during the 2019-20 reporting year were the result of misconduct allegations in 1000- and 2000-level courses (Table 7). Fewer cases resulted from allegations in progressively higher-level courses. Some cases of academic misconduct occur outside of a formal class taken for academic credit. Those cases are included in the category “Other”.

Table 7
Committee on Academic Misconduct
Distribution of Cases Based on Course Level (Number)
2018-2019 Academic Year

Course Level (Semesters)	Number of Cases	% of Cases
1000	294	40.8%
2000	237	32.9%
3000	70	9.7%
4000	48	6.7%
5000	40	5.5%
6000	5	0.7%
7000	24	3.3%
8000	1	0.1%
Other	2	0.3%
TOTAL	721	100%

Table 8 summarizes the number of cases resolved at each level by student class rank. The distribution of cases for undergraduates is fairly evenly distributed across all ranks. The greatest number of cases and the highest percentage of cases within a single rank was for rank 2 students. Undergraduates are entering the university with more credit hours, which means that some rank 2 students are in their first year at the university. The number of cases involving ranks 1, 2, 3 and 4 students was fairly evenly distributed. When cases by rank are expressed as a percentage of total students within each rank based on fifteenth-day student enrollment for Autumn 2019, the distribution of cases was as follows: rank 1=1.45% (10,698 students); rank 2=1.43% (11,671 students), rank 3=1.31% (11,554 students), rank 4=1.06% (19,604 students), and graduate students (excluding graduate professional students)=0.28% (11,305 students). Note: a rank of “Other” may represents visitor or other individuals who took courses as non-degree students and/or were enrolled in a certification program.

Table 8
Committee on Academic Misconduct
Distribution of Cases Based on Student Rank and Course Level
2019-2020 Academic Year

Rank	1	2	3	4	GRD	Other	Totals	% by Course Level
Course Level								
1000	108	93	56	37	0	0	294	40.8%
2000	45	63	70	56	0	3	237	32.9%
3000	2	5	17	42	1	3	70	9.7%
4000	0	2	7	39	0	0	48	6.7%
5000	1	4	1	31	3	0	40	5.5%
6000	0	0	0	0	5	0	5	0.7%
7000	0	0	0	2	22	0	24	3.3%
8000	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0.1%
Other	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0.3%
TOTAL	156	167	151	207	32	8	721	100.00%
% by Rank	21.6%	23.2%	20.9%	28.7%	4.4%	1.1%	100.00%	

V. Summary of Disciplinary and Grade Sanctions

When COAM finds that a student has violated the University's *Code of Student Conduct*, COAM imposes sanctions. A sanction typically includes a disciplinary component and a grade-related component.

The disciplinary sanctions imposed by COAM and the number of cases involved are summarized in **Table 9**. Of the 721 cases resolved during the 2019-2020 Academic Year, 656 resulted in a finding of "in violation" and these were accompanied by a disciplinary sanction. As these data demonstrate, most students found *in violation of the Code of Student Conduct* received a sanction of "disciplinary probation."

Table 9
Committee on Academic Misconduct
Summary of Disciplinary Sanctions
2019-2020 Academic Year

Disciplinary Sanction	Number of Cases "In Violation"	% of Cases
Formal reprimand	45	6.9%
Disciplinary probation (range = 1 term to "until graduation")	590	89.9%
Suspension (range = 1 to 3 terms)	17	2.6%
Dismissal	4	0.6%
Totals	656	100%

The grade sanctions imposed by COAM and the numbers of cases involved are summarized in **Table 10**.

Of the 656 cases in which a student was found "in violation" in 2019-20, no grade sanction was authorized in 21 of the cases. As these data demonstrate, the modal grade sanction for students found "in violation" of the University's *Code of Student Conduct* is an authorization

for a “0” on all or part of the assignment and a further reduction of the student’s final grade. In most instances, COAM authorizes the instructor to award a grade sanction. In some instances, COAM imposes the sanction of a failing grade directly via the Registrar: “re-enroll with a failing grade” and “E” by action of University Committee. These failing grades may not be removed from the advising report or transcript by petition or retroactive withdrawal from the course. Hearing panels and hearing officers have the option to create grade sanctions appropriate to individual cases of academic misconduct. Grade sanctions created by hearing panels or hearing officers are included in the category “Other”.

Table 10
Committee on Academic Misconduct
Summary of Grade Sanctions
2019-2020 Academic Year

Grade Sanction	Number of Cases	% of Cases
None	21	3.2%
Authorization for a "0" on all or part of the assignment	128	19.5%
Authorization for a reduction in the student's final course grade	46	7.0%
Authorization for “0” on the assignment and a further reduction of the final letter grade in the course	428	65.2%
Authorization for a final grade of "E" or “U” in the course	0	0.0%
Final Grade of E/U/NP by “action of University Committee”	28	4.2%
Re-enroll with a final failing grade for the course	0	0.0%
Other	5	0.8%
Totals	656	100%

A summary of the disciplinary sanctions received by graduate students who were found in

violation of the Code of Student Conduct is given in **Table 11**.

Table 11
Committee on Academic Misconduct
Summary of Disciplinary Sanctions for Graduate Students
2019-2020 Academic Year

Disciplinary Sanction	Number of Cases "In Violation"	% of Cases
Formal reprimand	4	13.3%
Disciplinary probation (range = 1 term to "until graduation")	23	76.7%
Suspension (range = 1 to 3 terms)	2	6.7%
Dismissal	1	3.3%
Totals	30	100%

A summary of the grade sanctions received by graduate students during the 2019-2020 academic year is provided in **Table 12**.

Table 12
Committee on Academic Misconduct
Summary of Grade Sanctions for Graduate Students
2019-2020 Academic Year

Grade Sanction	Number of Cases	% of Cases
None	4	13.3%
Authorization for a "0" on all or part of the assignment	5	16.7%
Authorization for a reduction in the student's final course grade	0	0.0%
Authorization for "0" on the assignment and a further reduction of the final letter grade in the course	17	56.7%

Authorization for a final grade of "E" or "U" in the course	0	0.0%
Final Grade of E/U/NP by "action of University Committee"	4	13.3%
Re-enroll with a final failing grade for the course	0	0.0%
Other	0	0.0%
Totals	30	100

VI. Appeals

A student who has been found in violation of the *Code of Student Conduct* has the right to appeal the original decision of the hearing panel or hearing officer. The appeal is not intended to re-hear or re-argue the same case, and is limited to specific grounds as outlined in the *Code of Student Conduct*. Appeals of decisions of the Committee on Academic Misconduct or its Coordinator are submitted for decision to the Executive Vice President and Provost or designee. Of the 656 cases in which the student was found to be in violation by COAM in 2019-2020, 59 cases were appealed. In 35 instances, the decision of the Committee was upheld. Twentyfour of the appeals were granted. In some cases both the disciplinary and grade sanctions were changed. In thirteen cases the grade sanctions were adjusted. In three cases the charges were dismissed. In three cases the dates of the disciplinary probation were adjusted to allow students to participate in studies abroad. In six cases a suspension was reduced to disciplinary probation until graduation. In one case disciplinary probation was reduced to a formal reprimand. In one case disciplinary dismissal was reduced to disciplinary suspension for three terms. In one case the dates of a disciplinary suspension were changed and in one case a student was allowed to register for classes, but the disciplinary and grade sanctions were not adjusted.